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FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

School Leader Update

July 2011

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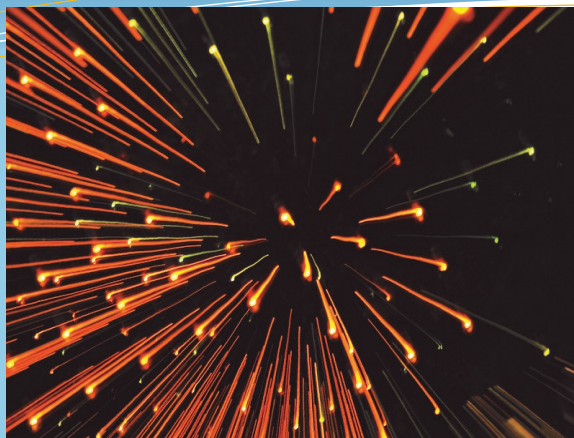
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New website

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) launched a new website design in June. Please note that the DE's URL is now www.educateiowa.gov. We hope our audience finds the new design features helpful when searching for information. If you need assistance with the website please don't hesitate to contact us.

New design features :

- Audience-focused homepage
- Social media integration including blogs, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, and Twitter



Future course for world-class school system

At long last, I am pleased to say the 2011 legislative session has come to a close. While no side got completely what they wanted, I have high hopes the legislature has provided a sustain-



Jason Glass, Director

able level of funding for education for the next two years, and that we will set the state's budget on a course to greater availability of resources in the days ahead. While this was a bruising and long legislative session for everyone, I remain relentlessly optimistic about our future.

In the days ahead, we (as a state) will consider what steps we will take to build a truly world-class school system in Iowa and how we will reach the Governor's stated goal of having the best schools in the country, if not the world. The boldness of this goal and the effort that will be required to achieve it raises fear in many. What if we can't do it? What if we fail? I would say look into the eyes of the school children in any Iowa community and ask "how can we not do all we can to reach this goal?"

Our process in the days ahead is fairly simple. First, we must come to agreement that there is indeed a problem and that we have room to improve. Reflexively, many will rise up to defend the status quo, or argue the depth and complexity of our problems are too great to confront. We must reject this fatalism. We will also see those who would use this time as a political opportunity and who will seek to use strategies of "blame and shame" to hurl vitriol at our schools and our educators. These attacks are neither accurate nor helpful. Our first critical step is in the formation of some consensus that we all have a moral obligation to take up the work of improving our schools.

Next, we must work together with open hearts and minds to identify those specific tactics and strategies we will take together to improve our schools. These approaches must transcend politics, party, and ideology and instead be focused squarely on what will yield the best out-

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White House Rural Council strengthens rural communities

The White House today announced the establishment of the first White House Rural Council. While rural communities face challenges, they also present economic potential. To address these challenges, build on the Administration's rural economic strategy, and improve the implementation of that strategy, the President Obama signed an executive order establishing the White House Rural Council.



The White House Rural Council will coordinate programs across government to encourage public-private partnerships to promote further economic prosperity and quality of life in rural communities nationwide. Chaired by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, the Council will be responsible for providing recommendations for investment in rural areas and will coordinate Federal engagement with a variety of rural stakeholders, including agricultural organizations, small businesses, and state, local, and tribal governments.



In the coming months, the White House Rural Council will focus on job creation and economic development by increasing the flow of capital to rural areas, promoting innovation, expanding digital and physical networks, and celebrating opportunity through America's natural resources. The Council will begin by discussing key factors for growth.

For more information please see the President's Executive Order here: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/2011ruralcouncil_eo_rel.pdf.



Future course for world-class school system....continued from page one

outcomes for our students. This phase will involve a great deal of discussion and consideration, including the engagement of our honored legislators and Governor in this process.

Finally, we will come to the hard work of enacting our plans. Meaningful change comes not from quick fixes or "silver bullet" approaches, but from focused, committed, and sustained effort. We can build a world class school system for Iowa and we will build it to last. The exceptional education students will get in this new system will be our legacy and gift to the children of Iowa.

I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming education summit in Des Moines later this month. We have assembled a remarkably talented and diverse group of speakers with the goal of starting great conversations across Iowa about how we improve our schools.

As always, thank you for all that you do and for the dedication you provide to your students, schools, and communities. I honor your efforts and am always at your service.

- Jason E. Glass

Early Childhood Preschool Programs

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

Following the adjournment of the 2011 Legislative Session, the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) will continue under the current program operating structure (Iowa Code chapter 256C). However, changes include a reduced foundation aid from .6 to .5 per pupil; and administration of program costs are restricted to 5 percent for the 2011-2012 school year. The governor has 30 days to sign the bill into law so as more information is available, the DE will provide guidance to districts through email communication and on the SWVPP website at http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279.

The DE will continue to provide technical support for the SWVPP and will update the schedule of verification visits to assure programs are meeting quality standards.

For more information about the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children, please contact Judy Russell (515-281-4705 or Judy.Russell@iowa.gov) or Penny Milburn (515-281-7844 or Penny.Milburn@iowa.gov).

Qualifications for preschool teacher associates

Districts and community partners participating in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children (SWVPP) and/or any early childhood program serving a child on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must comply with one of three program standards: Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS), Head Start Program Performance Standards or National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In the IQPPS, one of the required criterions from Standard 6 – Teaching addresses the qualifications for teacher associates in preschool programs. Both bullets must be met in order to meet this criterion.

Standard 6, Criterion 4: Assistant teachers – teacher aids (staff who implement program activities under direct supervision) have a high school diploma or GED and:

- 50 percent of assistant teachers-teacher aides have at least a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or equivalent; and
- 100 percent of assistant teachers-teacher aides who do not have at least a CDA are enrolled in a program leading to a CDA or equivalent, are actively participating in the program, and are demonstrating progress toward the CDA or equivalent.

Teacher associate requirements specific to Head Start and NAEYC program standards can be found on the SWVPP web-

site under “Application Documents and Guidance” in the document entitled *Qualifications for Preschool Teacher Associates* http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279

For more information about the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children or the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, please contact Judy Russell (515-281-4705 or Judy.Russell@iowa.gov) or Penny Milburn (515-281-7844 or Penny.Milburn@iowa.gov).



Data & Reporting

SINA / DINA application via Ed Info

Beginning this fall, the submission of the Schools In Need of Assistance and Districts in Need of Assistance (SINA/DINA) plans will be electronic through Ed Info. The application is scheduled to open in mid-July after the identification of schools and districts through the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) process. For additional information about the SINA/DINA process, please click [here](#).

Schools and districts that have a current SINA/DINA plan in place will be able to copy and paste information from your current plan to the new SINA/DINA application. Additional information and training will be provided at the August 8, 2011 Data Conference at the FFA Enrichment Center adjoining the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) Ankeny Campus at 1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa 50023. To register for this *free* event, click [here](#).

For more information or assistance completing the SINA/DINA plan, contact Karla Day at 515-281-7145 karla.day@iowa.gov or Susan Selby at 515-281-4732 or susan.selby@iowa.gov.

Annual Progress Report deadline



The deadline for submission of the Annual Progress Report (APR) is September 15, 2011.

The secure website is now available for updating. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)/Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) data will be available in August for schools and districts.

The completed electronic APR will be available to the public via the Iowa Department of Education's website to distribute to stakeholders who may not have internet access.

Technical assistance can be accessed at http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=368

For questions, contact Holly Barnes at 515-242-6173 or holly.barnes@iowa.gov.



ANNUAL GOALS 2011-2012

Coming in August, 2011, a technical assistance document will be available regarding Annual Progress Report goal writing for 2011-2012, in light of new Iowa Assessments and use of Standard Scores (SS) to indicate proficiency.

Initial guidance for districts that have been writing goals based on proficiency as defined as the 41st percentile is to simply refer to "percent proficient." Contact Holly Barnes at 515-242-6173 or holly.barnes@iowa.gov for additional assistance.

Student Health and Nutrition

Direct certification for free meals includes foster children

Direct certification is a procedure to automatically qualify children in Food Assistance and Family Investment Program (FIP) households for free meals. *New in school year 2011-2012, foster children will be included in the Direct Certification process.*

There will be a separate file download as part of the Direct Certification file for foster children. Annually, all public local education agencies (LEAs) and some non-public LEAs report student data to Project Electronic Access System for Iowa Education Records (EASIER). The enrollment records from Project EASIER are compared to records from the Department of Human Services (DHS). Downloadable lists of children who are exact matches ("Students in Last EASIER Submission"), siblings of children who are exact matches ("Potential Students Found in District") and foster children will be available to public and non-public LEAs that have submitted to Project EASIER. The children identified during this process are eligible to receive free meal benefits. LEAs will have access only to the list of children in their district/school.

The Direct Certification lists will be available on the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) 2000 system on July 15, 2011. LEAs are required to download and take action on the Direct Certification lists in a timely manner. It is in the LEA's best interest to send out eligibility status notification based on Direct Certification prior to registration. For questions, contact Patti Harding at 515-281-4754 or patti.harding@iowa.gov.





Legal Lessons

The contact for all Legal Lessons items is Carol Greta (carol.greta@iowa.gov or 515-281-8661).

Reporting bullying, residency guidance

Reporting Incidents of Bullying/Harassment

Since the 2007-2008 school year, the Iowa Department of Education has been helping schools implement the part of the state's anti-bullying law that requires schools to collect and report "harassment and bullying incidence data."

Based on several questions that have been raised about what is meant by a "written complaint," the DE offers this clarification:

Always report **all** incidents that meet the criteria based on the targeted student's **perception** of the incident – if the student's perception of the incident appears to meet the definition of bullying or harassment (below), a written complaint is then initiated and the incident is investigated and reported as unfounded or founded. So, schools need to report incidents as founded or unfounded if the initial report (however it is communicated) appears to meet the definition before the incident is investigated.

Iowa Code section 280.28 defines bullying and harassment as follows:

b. "Harassment" and "bullying" shall be construed to mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- (1) Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
- (2) Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
- (3) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
- (4) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

c. "Trait or characteristic of the student" includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

Federal Guidance: Obligation to Educate Resident Students

In May, the U.S. Department of Education issued a letter to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) about providing equal educational opportunities to students residing within the LEA. That letter, available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201101.html>, is a good reminder that actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status of a student is irrelevant.

If a student resides in Iowa, the school district of residence must provide a tuition-free education to the student.

Of course, a district may require students and their families to provide proof of residency within the district. Superintendents know too well that utility bills or lease agreements cannot always be relied upon. Sometimes the only sure way to know the residency of families is to stake out the alleged residence to see if the family is truly staying there. There are no shortcuts to this; districts owe it to their taxpayers to make reasonably sure that students who receive a tuition-free education are truly entitled to the same.

Finally, the letter reminds superintendents that a district may not deny enrollment to a student if the student chooses not to provide a social security number. "If a district chooses to request a social security number (SSN), it shall inform the individual that the disclosure is voluntary, provide the statutory or other basis upon which it is seeking the number, and explain what uses will be made of it." The only reason to request a SSN in Iowa is to enable a family to participate in free or reduced price meals; the statutory basis is 79 P.L. 396, the National School Lunch Act.

Flooding Update 2011

The Department extends its sympathy and support to all students, parents, and school personnel affected by the flooding occurring in Western Iowa currently. As in 2008 and years before, a disaster of this scope can have an impact on school programming.

We anticipate there may be questions about residency and counting students, transportation issues, athletic eligibility, and flexibility on regulations, among other issues. To that end, the Department has established a point of contact for all flood-related inquiries from school districts or parents. Gary Schwartz, who was the agency liaison to the Rebuild Iowa Office during the floods of 2008, will serve as the point of contact for all flood-related questions related to school functioning. Contact Gary at (515) 281-4743 or gary.schwartz@iowa.gov.

Calendar

July 1	• Diagnostic Evaluations Pay Schedule
July 1	• Empowerment (ECI) Payment Schedule
July 7	• Final Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Certification Due
July 15	• Specially Accredited School Annual Report Due
July 31	• Nonpublic School Transportation Reimbursement Claim— 2nd semester
August 1	• Foster Care Claim
August 1	• Special Education District Court Placed Claim Due
August 1	• Special Education Foster Care Claim Due
August 1	• Special Education High Cost Fund Claim Due
August 1	• Special Education Provided to Nonpublic Schools Claim Due
August 1	• Progress Report Toward Reorganization Due
August 1	• Juvenile Home Claim
August 1	• Foster Care Claim Certification

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312-730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, e-mail: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov



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